

The Judgment of Believers

by Danny Lirette

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John the Apostle was a close beloved friend of Jesus (John 13:23). This same John, who sat with Jesus and the other disciples at the Last Supper, said in Revelation 1:10-18 the following: "It was the Lord's Day, and I was worshipping in the Spirit. Suddenly, I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet blast. It said, "Write in a book everything you see, and send it to the seven churches in the cities of Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. When I turned to see who was speaking to me, I saw seven gold lampstands. And standing in the middle of the lampstands was someone like the Son of Man. He was wearing a long robe with a gold sash across his chest. His head and his hair were white like wool, as white as snow. And his eyes were like flames of fire. His feet were like polished bronze refined in a furnace, and his voice thundered like mighty ocean waves. He held seven stars in his right hand, and a sharp two-edged sword came from his mouth. And his face was like the sun in all its brilliance. When I saw him, I fell at his feet as if I were dead. But he laid his right hand on me and said, "Don't be afraid! I am the First and the Last. I am the living one. I died, but look—I am alive forever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and the grave."

John, who walked with Christ, now falls down like a dead man at the sight of the Risen Lord... and this was a vision! John was terrified. Praise God that Jesus said, "Don't be afraid!". he's for us... not against us!

It's to this same Risen Jesus that all Believers will stand to be judged. Their Salvation will not be judged but they will indeed be judged for their works; whether good or evil.

2 Corinthians 5:10 "For we must all stand before Christ to be judged. We will each receive whatever we deserve for the good or evil we have done in this earthly body."

Notice that we must "all" stand before Christ "to be judged". No Believer will escape this judgment; we'll all stand to receive what we deserve.

This judgment will be a judgment of works; what we have done while in this body on the earth:

In Romans 2:6 we read, "He will judge everyone according to what they have done." and then in Revelation 22:12 we read, "Look, I am coming soon, bringing my reward with me to repay all people according to their deeds."

Many today live as if there's no eternity; they live their lives the way that "they" want to; doing what "they" want to do, with no eternal focus in mind. God has given to each Believer giftings, talents and abilities and He desires that we invest what He's given to us:

Luke 19:12-26 "He said, "A nobleman was called away to a distant empire to be crowned king and then return. Before he left, he called together ten of his servants and divided among them ten pounds of silver, saying, 'Invest this for me while I am gone.' But his people hated him and sent a delegation after him to say, 'We do not want him to be our king.' "After he was crowned king, he returned and called in the servants to whom he had given the money. He wanted to find out what their profits were. The first servant reported, 'Master, I invested your money and made ten times the original amount!' "'Well done!' the king exclaimed. 'You are a good servant. You have been faithful with the little I entrusted to you, so you will be governor of ten cities as your reward.' "The next servant reported, 'Master, I invested your money and made five times the original amount.' "'Well done!' the king said. 'You will be governor over five cities.' "But the third servant brought back only the original amount of money and said, 'Master, I hid your money and kept it safe. I was afraid because you are a hard man to deal with, taking what isn't yours and harvesting crops you didn't plant.' "'You wicked servant!' the king roared. 'Your own words condemn you. If you knew that I'm a hard man who takes what isn't mine and harvests crops I didn't plant, why didn't you deposit my money in the bank? At least I could have gotten some interest on it.' "Then, turning to the others standing nearby, the king ordered, 'Take the money from this servant, and give it to the one who has ten pounds.' "'But, master,' they said, 'he already has ten pounds!' "'Yes,' the king replied, 'and to those who use well what they are given, even more will be given. But from those who do nothing, even what little they have will be taken away."

Will we be like the first, second or third servant? Whether like the first or second, we must not be like the third one, keeping what God has given to us to ourselves! Our goal is to see His Kingdom multiplied and that can only take place if we invest what He's given to us. The question is, what or who do we invest in?

1- We invest in Righteousness: Hosea 10:12 "I said, 'Plant the good seeds of righteousness, and you will harvest a crop of love. Plow up the hard ground of your hearts, for now is the time to seek the Lord, that he may come and shower righteousness upon you.'"

By investing in Righteousness, we're saying that we're not only going to abstain from evil but we're also going to cultivate the fruit of the Holy Spirit. Planting

seeds of righteousness means that we pray, fast, meditate on the Word, etc; it's much more than only saying no to sin! It means we plant; we work at cultivating a lifestyle of holiness.

2- We invest in people: Luke 14:12-14 "Then he turned to his host. "When you put on a luncheon or a banquet," he said, "don't invite your friends, brothers, relatives, and rich neighbors. For they will invite you back, and that will be your only reward. Instead, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. Then at the resurrection of the righteous, God will reward you for inviting those who could not repay you."

Notice that we invest – not only in those around us who we know as friends and family, but we also invest in those who are oppressed and who are known as the outcasts of society. In doing so, we store up for ourselves treasures in Heaven: souls!

It may not always be easy to invest in the lives of others and into righteousness, but if we have a focus on the fact that we'll one day be judged by the Lord Jesus for all we do while on the earth, we can come into an atmosphere of investing in people with enthusiasm:

1 Corinthians 15:58 "So, my dear brothers and sisters, be strong and immovable. Always work enthusiastically for the Lord, for you know that nothing you do for the Lord is ever useless."

We can do this because Hebrews 6:10 says, "For God is not unjust. He will not forget how hard you have worked for him and how you have shown your love to him by caring for other believers, as you still do."

God sees and writes down each time we bless someone with a cup of cold water in the Name of Jesus! He doesn't forget our works; He takes note of them!

All Believers will have their works tried by fire; some will have no reward and others will:

1 Corinthians 3:10-15 "Because of God's grace to me, I have laid the foundation like an expert builder. Now others are building on it. But whoever is building on this foundation must be very careful. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one we already have—Jesus Christ. Anyone who builds on that foundation may use a variety of materials—gold, silver, jewels, wood, hay, or straw. But on the judgment day, fire will reveal what kind of work each builder has done. The fire will show if a person's work has any value. If the work survives, that builder will receive a reward. But if the work is burned up, the builder will suffer great loss. The builder will be saved, but like someone barely escaping through a wall of flames."

How then can we know if our good works are going to be rewarded and not be burned up? Afterall, unless we're doing God's work, we're not doing work of any value... no matter how good it looks before men:

John 5:19-20 " So Jesus explained, "I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself. He does only what he sees the Father doing. Whatever the Father does, the Son also does. For the Father loves the Son and shows him everything he is doing. In fact, the Father will show him how to do even greater works than healing this man. Then you will truly be astonished."

Notice that Jesus never said or did a single thing unless His Heavenly Father first called Him to say or do it. He relied completely, totally and absolutely on His Heavenly Father to move in and through Him to touch and transform lives. We must do the same; we must rely on the Holy Spirit to do in and through us the Will of God and this comes through prayer:

John 15:7-8, " But if you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted! When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father."